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USUN FOR DREW SCHUFLETOWSKI, USOSCE FOR STEVE STEGER

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SUBJECT: KOSOVO: SPECIAL ENVOY AHTISAARI HOPES TO BEGIN
DIRECT TALKS IN JULY

Classified By: COM PHILIP S. GOLDBERG FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: UN Special Envoy for Kosovo Status Talks Martti Ahtisaari told Contact Group (CG) liaison office heads on June 10 that he expects to brief the UNSC in early July and then hopes to host the first direct talks between senior Pristina and Belgrade officials the week of July 17. He warned Kosovo Albanian leaders against unilateral action, such as writing a constitution and urged Kosovo Serbs to rejoin Kosovo institutions. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) During a June 9-11 visit to Kosovo, UN Special Envoy for the Kosovo Status talks Martti Ahtisaari met separately with President Fatmir Sejdiu and Prime Minister Agim Ceku, and with the entire Kosovo Albanian negotiating team, representatives from the Serbian List for Kosovo and Metohija, Kosovo women leaders, non-Serb minorities, the mayors of the three northern majority Serb municipalities, UNMIK officials, and the international police commissioner.

¶3. (C) Ahtisaari briefed Contact Group liaison office heads June 10 on his plans to move forward on resolution of Kosovo's final status. He plans to go to New York to brief a closed session of the U.N. Security Council the second week of July and then host the first direct talks between Pristina and Belgrade in Vienna during the week of July 17. After this meeting he would return to New York for another closed session of the Security Council. He hopes to meet with Contact Group political directors in Brussels on June 30.

¶4. (C) Ahtisaari had met with SRSG Jessen-Petersen and Kosovo political leaders prior to the June 10 meeting with CG representatives. Ahtisaari said that in response to a proposal from Prime Minister Agim Ceku to write a constitution, he had suggested that the Kosovo side instead draft constitutional principles. Ahtisaari said he told the Unity Team that Kosovo Albanians must come up with a proposal that looks good "inside and outside the room." In a meeting of the Kosovo Albanian negotiating team on June 9, Ceku had reportedly proposed declaring Kosovo's independence and calling on individual countries to recognize it. (NOTE: COM used a dinner with Ceku on June 9 to discourage him strongly against this idea. END NOTE.). Ahtisaari told reporters on

June 11 after meetings with government officials that any unilateral action would be counterproductive.

¶15. (SBU) Ahtisaari told the Kosovo Albanian negotiating team that a 50-meter set-back for Serbian Orthodox monasteries and patriarchal sites as proposed by the team in Vienna, was not sufficient. On decentralization, Ahtisaari told the negotiating team that he would propose five new municipalities and repeated that there would be no partition of Kosovo and no separate Serb entity. He called on Kosovo Albanians to reach out to Serbs.

¶16. (C) Ahtisaari told CG representatives he was concerned about the security situation in northern Kosovo and that he met with Kosovo Police Commissioner Kai Vittrup to get his assessment. Vittrup told him that the police will increase the number of UN CIVPOL officers in northern Mitrovica and the three majority ethnic Serb municipalities from 500 to ¶1700. Ahtisaari warned against hasty judgments about responsibility for attacks against ethnic Serbs in the north. Vittrup also told Ahtisaari UNMIK police has identified 12 communities in which trouble might occur.

¶17. (SBU) After his meeting with the negotiating team, Ahtisaari called on all representatives of Serbs in Kosovo to accept the offer of the Kosovo government to participate in local institutions to build a multi-ethnic society. In his meeting with Ahtisaari on June 11, Serbian List for Kosovo and Metohija (SLKM) leader Oliver Ivanovic said he was still looking for ways to rejoin the government and Ahtisaari told CG representatives that this time he was more impressed that Ivanovic was being sincere. Ahtisaari also invited the SLKM to attend the talks in Vienna as observers.

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¶18. (C) COMMENT: Ahtisaari was characteristically blunt in his briefing to the Contact Group liaison office heads. He noted that too many people have an "ahistorical" view on how Kosovo's status should be decided, noting that "one cannot be even-handed." He asked the Contact Group to lean on Belgrade. At the same time, he seemed generally satisfied with Pristina's actions and proposals to date, although he will clearly look for them to do more on decentralization, cultural and religious preservation and the status talks themselves. END COMMENT.
GOLDBERG